MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents
FROM: Jacob Oliva
DATE: August 13, 2021

SUBJECT: House Bill (HB) 7011 – Student Literacy

The 2021 Legislature passed, and Governor DeSantis signed into law, House Bill 7011, Student Literacy. It is effective July 1, 2021, unless otherwise noted. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an overview of the bill and inform school districts of new responsibilities.

This bill sets out to improve existing literacy policy and practices and creates new systems of support for educators, parents, and students to improve student literacy outcomes. The bill:

1. **Revises section (s.) 1001.215, Florida Statutes (F.S.) - Just Read, Florida! Office** duties to include:
   - Training for both reading coaches and school administrators on evidence-based strategies to support professional growth and inform performance evaluations of instructional personnel.
   - Assisting in the evaluation of elementary grades instructional materials as part of the adoption cycle for ELA instructional materials in order to identify materials that are aligned to the science of reading and evidence-based strategies.
   - Bill Lines 175-211

2. **Revises s. 1002.55, F.S., and s. 1002.59, F.S., regarding prekindergarten instructor training and readiness rates**
   - Requires prekindergarten instructors complete three, 5-hour emergent literacy training courses and an emergent literacy training course at least once every 5 years after completion of initial three emergent literacy training courses. The courses must be developed in collaboration with Just Read, Florida!, must be recognized as part of the informal early learning career pathway identified by the Division of Early Learning (DEL) under s. 1002.995(1)(b), F.S., and must develop emergent literacy skills, including phonological awareness skills; they must be consistent with the evidence-based strategies identified in s. 1001.215(8), F.S.
   - For 2020-2021, readiness rates cannot be used to impose any sanction or penalty. For the 2021-2022 school year, the bill eliminates the use of kindergarten screening as part of the calculation of the readiness rate, and beginning in 2022-2023, results of the new coordinated screening and progress monitoring system pursuant to s. 1008.25(8), F.S., must be used to
determine student learning gains and norm-referenced learning outcomes, and to calculate a provider’s kindergarten readiness rate annually.

- Early Learning Coalitions must adopt a best-practices plan for Transition to Kindergarten.
- Bill Lines 336-480

3. **Revises s. 1003.57(1), F.S., regarding exceptional student instruction**
   - Within 10 days after a student’s individual education plan or 504 accommodation plan, a school district must notify the parent of the student of all the scholarship options available under chapter 1002.
   - Bill Lines 489-497

4. **Revises s. 1006.28(2)(d), F.S., regarding school library media services**
   - School districts must provide training to school librarians and media specialists regarding the prohibition against distributing harmful material to minors under s. 847.012, F.S., and applicable case law, and best practices for providing students access to age-appropriate materials and library resources.
   - Bill Lines 647-671

5. **Revises s. 1008.25, F.S., to establish the VPK-Grade 8 coordinated screening and progress monitoring system**
   - Requires the department, in collaboration with the DEL, to procure and require the use of a VPK-Grade 8 coordinated screening and progress monitoring system and provides requirements for such system to be administered starting in 2022-2023 school year.
   - Provides the frequency with which such system must be administered during the program year or school year, as applicable.
   - Requires coordinated screening and progress monitoring system results to be reported to the department and maintained in a specified department data warehouse.
   - Requires such results to be provided to a student's teacher and parent.
   - Requires the department, in collaboration with the DEL, to provide training and support for implementation of the screening and progress monitoring system.
   - Prohibits a school from waiting until a certain evaluation is completed to provide specified evidence-based interventions for a student whose parent submits documentation from a licensed professional under chapter 490 which demonstrates that the student has been diagnosed with dyslexia. Interventions must be provided based on the student’s specific areas of difficulty as identified by the licensed professional.
   - Requires schools to communicate with parents at least monthly regarding the progress of certain students and provide requirements for such communication.
   - Requires the department to compile resources that school districts must incorporate into read-at-home plans and provides requirements for such resources including, but not limited to, assessment information, overview of conducting evaluation for Exceptional Student Education, information on characteristics of dyslexia, etc.
   - Requires that a parent be provided a hardcopy of such resources upon request.
• Provides that certain prekindergarten students may be eligible for intensive reading interventions; authorizes a school district to pay for such interventions using the reading allocation of the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP).
• Bill Lines 832-922

6. Creates s. 1008.365, F.S., Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence Act to establish the Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence (RAISE) Program within the department
   • Requires the department to establish 20 literacy support regions and regional support teams, at the direction of a regional literacy support director, to assist schools with improving student reading outcomes.
     o Requires a regional literacy support director and regional support teams to meet certain criteria and provides duties and requirements for such teams.
     o Authorizes the department to establish criteria for identifying schools that need supports and requires schools serving students K-5 be identified for support if 50 percent of its students who take the statewide ELA assessment score below a Level 3 for any grade level, or for K-3 students, progress monitoring data collected by the new coordinated screening and progress monitoring system shows that 50 percent or more of the students are not on track to pass the statewide ELA assessment.
     o Requires such schools to implement a school improvement plan, or if school is already implementing a plan, the plan must be amended to explicitly address strategies for improving reading performance.
     o Requires the department to provide progress monitoring data to literacy support teams regarding the implementation of supports.
     o Provides requirements for such supports including, but not limited to, professional development on evidence-based strategies, assisting with implementing data-informed instruction and the use of high-quality instructional materials and multi-tiered system of supports.
     o Provides that certain schools are not required to implement a turnaround option or take other corrective actions.
     o Authorizes a school to discontinue receiving supports and implementing a school improvement plan once data shows that the school no longer meets the established criteria.
   • Requires the department to establish a tutoring program and develop certain training to prepare high school students to tutor certain students.
     o Provides eligibility criteria for high school students to participate in the tutoring program.
     o Requires school districts that wish to participate in such a program to recruit, train and deploy eligible high school students.
     o Provides requirements for such program.
Requires the department to designate certain high school students as New Worlds Scholars.

Requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt rules.

- Bill Lines 944-1082

**7. Revises s. 1011.62(9), F.S., regarding the K-12 Comprehensive Evidence-Based Reading Allocation**

- Includes certain prekindergarten students who have completed VPK and are at risk of being identified as having a substantial deficiency in early literacy skills may be eligible for intensive reading interventions; authorizes a school district to pay for such interventions using the reading allocation of the FEFP.
- Root-cause analysis must be conducted and a reflection tool must be developed by the department to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions implemented in the prior year.
- Requires the department to annually release to certain school districts their allocations of appropriated funds by July 1.
- Requires the department to annually report certain findings and recommendations to the SBE by February 1.
- Provides a definition for evidence-based.

**8. Revises s. 1012.586, F.S., regarding the Reading Endorsement**

- Requires the department to adopt, by the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year, one or more statewide competency-based pathways for instructional personnel to earn a reading endorsement.
- Provides requirements for the department in adopting such pathways, including a department review of the competencies for alignment to evidence-based strategies and recommend changes to the SBE. Recommended changes must address identification of the characteristics of conditions such as dyslexia, implementation of evidence-based interventions and effective progress monitoring.
- Requires school districts to resubmit their reading endorsement add-on program for review and approval by July 1, 2023.
- Prohibits instructional personnel from earning a reading endorsement solely by achieving a passing score on a specified assessment beginning July 1, 2024.
- Bill Lines 1486-1510

The department will provide further guidance and technical assistance related to these changes in law.

For additional questions or concerns regarding the information provided, please contact Lindsey Brown, Executive Director of Just Read, Florida!, at Lindsey.Brown@fldoe.org.

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